

No: IV-15-010

April 8, 2015

CONTACT: Victor Dricks, 817-200-1128
Lara Uselding, 817-200-1519

NRC Says Wolf Creek Nuclear Plant Has Improved Work Environment

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued a [letter](#) to Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp. (WCNOC) officials saying they have adequately addressed safety conscious work environment concerns at the Wolf Creek nuclear plant, located north of Burlington, Kan.

On Aug. 19, 2013, the NRC sent WCNOC a [chilling effect letter](#) following identification of two safety culture concerns. First, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration issued a discrimination finding to Enercon, a contractor, for firing a worker who raised concerns with how work was being performed at the plant. The NRC determined that the firing might affect the willingness of other workers to raise safety concerns on safety-related work at the plant.

Second, NRC found that a chilled work environment existed within the plant's quality assurance group that performs audits of safety-related work. A chilled work environment is one in which workers are hesitant to raise safety concerns for fear of retaliation. In response to the NRC's chilling effect letter, WCNOC officials implemented a range of corrective actions and conducted safety culture surveys at the site to assess the effectiveness of those actions, which yielded positive results.

In January and February of this year, NRC inspectors reviewed WCNOC's corrective actions and interviewed plant employees to verify actions taken were effective. The [report](#) documents NRC's inspection results verifying that the new site-wide programs aimed at improving the work environment have been successful in addressing the issues that led to a chilled work environment.

Today, NRC also issued a [letter](#) to Enercon saying the contract company has successfully implemented corrective actions to ensure workers feel free to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

NRC will continue to monitor the plant operator's ongoing activities to ensure they are effective in maintaining a long-term healthy work environment.